

Clara Barton

CONFIDENTIAL

25 May, 1944.

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

Your column in yesterday's New York World Telegram was of particular interest to me, especially that part of it relating to Florence Nightingale and Clara Barton. I agree with you heartily that the women of this generation have almost unlimited opportunity to participate in "national and international education" to say nothing of other vital problems affecting the nation.

Florence Nightingale did, indeed, sacrifice a great deal to bring about the admittance of women to the nursing profession and helped generally to elevate it to the high plane which it enjoys today. But, so far as Clara Barton is concerned, I am taking the liberty of sending to you some data which came to us from Miss Mabel Boardman, who, as you know, has just retired from the Red Cross after her many years of service to that organization.

The Hall of Fame is having its quinquennial election in 1945, and persons throughout the country are now engaged in creating propaganda for candidates whom they wish to be considered in this election. Among these candidates is Clara Barton, and I assume some of the persons interested in her nomination for the Hall of Fame have written to you to call your attention to the achievements of Miss Barton. After reading the material which is enclosed, I am sure you will agree with us that she is hardly an appropriate candidate for any honor.

The presentation of Miss Barton's name is causing us some embarrassment, especially as we feel that this is not a good time to publicize any facts that would tend to cast even a remote shadow upon the Red Cross organization, and also, we think that the information should be made public by the Red Cross, rather than by this office. Should you

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desire further facts, Miss Boardman will be very happy to give them to you and show you the original documents. Miss Boardman will be in Washington, I understand, until the 12th of June, when she expects to leave for her holiday until the latter part of September.

In view of the above, I sincerely hope that you will do all that you can to dissuade persons from honoring Miss Barton, and that you will be good enough to return Miss Boardman's confidential data to me.

With appreciation of your helpfulness, believe me,

Respectfully and sincerely yours,

Bertha L. Lyons, (Mrs. N.)
Assistant to the Director.

Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt
The White House
Washington, D. C.